

WILLIAM DIAMOND JOHNSTON

Oral family history says my Grandfather was born in Copenhagen, Denmark and his mother died at his birth or when he was three weeks of age. Great Grandfather (John Elof Johnson) left him with a sister of John Elof's and he came to Utah. The baby was named John William Johnson. John Elof sent for William when he was five or six years old and met him at the dock in New York. William had crossed the ocean alone. William was crying because he had left his candy on the ship.

No one seems to know the mother's name except John Elof and his sister Augusta M. Anderson, with whom William was left with to be raised. Neither ever told who the mother was. "Grandma" Anderson had an adopted daughter named 'Hattie', who was about seventeen years older than William. She never married and lived to be ninety-five. I can remember her and also 'Grandma'. Hattie told my mother of how Grandpa (William) came to Utah. Grandpa, himself, never talked about it, but always claimed he was born in Salt Lake City. NO records have been found for either location of birth.

AT age twelve he ran away to Park City and started supporting himself. He worked in the blacksmith shop of Edward Berry for three years in payment for his room and board. He had a straw hat which he wore Summer and Winter. One day Judge Shields asked why he was wearing a straw hat in the Winter and Grandpa told him it was the only hat he had. So Judge Shields bought him a cap and a felt hat.

John Elof told William to spell his name with a T, altho John ELOf spelled his sur name without the T. John Elof would walk down the street and never speak to Grandpa. They both were very stubborn. John Elof had married again and now ask my Grandfather to change his name from John William. Grandpa chose William Diamond Johnston. John Elof then named his new baby son John William Johnson. Later this son of John Elof's died and John Elof named a son by his third marriage, John William Johnson.

Grandpa married Charlotta Buys on Dec. 25, 1899. Their first child lived only two months due to having whooping cough. Then my mother Augusta Opal was born. After her came two stillborn daughters. Grandpa buried them himself, making the caskets and the headstones.

Grandpa rented a shop from Jim Clyde and opened his own business in Heber in 1906. He had worked in the mines prior to this as a stationary engineer. He worked in the shop for years andj then bought it. He had 52 years all together in that shop. HE donated work to every chapel in the Stake at that time. The large window in the Second Ward Chapel (now the Catholic Church) was made by him. He never sent a bill to a widow, regardless how much was owed him. The chains holding the lights in the Heber Tabernacle (now the City offices) were made by him, as were many of the door hinges at the 'Homestead Resort'.

When he worked at the Park Utah Mine in 1925 (he worked three winters to help his income) they said he was the best steel man West of the Mississippi. He was also the best horse shoe man in Utah. At his funeral, Don Clyde paid tribute by saying the 'Ancient Hebeiness could lay down his lantern at Grndpa's shop as he was an honest man.

Grndpa died on 17 May, 1956 at the age of 77 (as near as we can determine) and was buried in the Heber Cemetery.

He loves all children but my brother and me especially. Of course, since we were his only grandchildren. Grandpa held our son Michael before Grandma was able to and so Grandpa thought Michael was indeed special. Grandpa was very anxious about the birth of our second son, Harvey. However, Grandpa died before he was able to see Harvey J. Harvey looks (Cleft Chin) and acts a lot like Gandpa, even to walking with his hand on his hip as Grandpa did for years.

Most all the children in Heber can remenber playing in and around the blacksmith shop. My husband remembers throwing new horse shoes over his shoulder, out of the shop onto Main Street.

Grandpa make him pick them up. They go along well and after we were married would talk for hours at a time. When a gasoline lawn mower exploded and burnt him in 1955, he called me to come and take him home. He never went back to the shop. He walked with a cane after that. He was operated on (postate) in Jan. 1956. It was malignant. He died the following May.

HE was very independent and accepted help from no one. He made me a fireplace set and a log holder of his own design. They are very prized by our family.

Many times when Glade and I were little he would take us to a cafe where he had a beer and Glade and I had little loaves of bread with our rootbeer. But we could never tell Grandma. He also took us to the movies almost every week and we sat in the balcony. Just us three. My memories of him are happy ones.

Erva Billie Jordan North

A Permanent Record of the
Obituary and Funeral Details which appeared in

DESERT NEWS AND TELEGRAM
SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH
MAY 18 1956

Memorial Obituary

William D. Johnston


HEBER—William D. Johnston, 77, local blacksmith and oldest artisan of Heber died at his home Thursday 4:59 p.m. after a six-month illness.

Born April 11, 1879, in Salt Lake City, he was a son of Mr. and Mrs. John E. Johnston. He was reared in Salt Lake City by an uncle and aunt, Mr. and Mrs. Andrew Anderson.

At the age of 18, he went to work as a blacksmith in Park City, and Mr. Johnston has since followed the trade. He worked in Park City and Nevada prior to his coming to Heber where he was the town blacksmith for the past 50 years. He married Charlotte Buys on Dec. 25, 1899, in Heber.

Survivors: widow; a daughter, Mrs. G. E. (Opal) Jordan; Heber; two grandchildren and three great-grandchildren; a sister, Mrs. Evelyn Curtis, Long Beach, Calif.

Funeral Sunday 3 p.m. in the Heber Second-Fifth Ward chapel, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Friends call at Olpin Mortuary Saturday 2 to 6 p.m. and Sunday prior. Burial in Heber Cemetery.




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SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH
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Memorial Obituary

William D. Johnston
HEBER—William D. Johnston, 77, local blacksmith and oldest artisan of Heber died at his home in Heber on Friday, May 17, 1956, after a six-month illness.

Born April 11, 1879, in Salt Lake City, he was a son of Mr. and Mrs. John Eli Johnston. He was raised in Salt Lake City by an uncle and aunt, Mr. and Mrs. Andrew Anderson.

At the age of 16, he went to work as a blacksmith in Park City, Utah. Mr. Johnston has since followed the trade, he worked in Park City and Nevada prior to his coming to Heber where he was the town blacksmith for the past 50 years. He married Charlotte Buivs on Dec. 28, 1930, in Heber.

Survivors: widow; a daughter, Mrs. G. E. (Opal) Jordan; Heber; two grandchildren and three great-grandchildren; a sister, Mrs. Eve, Mrs. Carl, Long Beach, Calif.

Funeral: Sunday, April 19, in the Heber Second-Fifth Ward chapel, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Prayers will be at 10 a.m. and 7 to 9 p.m. and Sunday, April 20, at 10 a.m. and 7 to 9 p.m. in Heber Cemetery.